The war with England was felt therefore to be just. Russia was in a state of hostility, but quiescent because she had meddled with what was not her affair. If she began a war, that likewise would be a conflict on Napoleon's part for French independence. How could Austria be put in the same position? The answer was not difficult for a man of such universal grasp. It was clear that those states dependent on France which, following her example, had adopted in turn the forms and constitution of a directorial, and subsequently of a consular, republic, must still follow their leader and accept the rule of a single man. They could not be imperial commonwealths except as part of France, for there could be but one emperor: they could accomplish the end only by giving a new meaning to kingship. The Italian republic was not averse to securing constitutional monarchy if only it might be rid of French officials and the payment of subsidies. Taking advantage of this, Napoleon determined to make the change, and bestow the crown either on Joseph or on the child which was accepted by the world as Louis's eldest son. On this infant he had always lavished the attentions of a father. Both brothers flatly refused the proposal on the ground that it would prejudice their rights in the imperial succession. Their sovereign appeared to be very angry, but soon suggested to the Italian delegation which he had summoned to Paris that he might himself accept the dignity, a hint which was a command. Late in March, with a suite comprising the chief courtiers, Napoleon began his progress toward Milan. The Emperor of Austria—for to this title Francis was reduced by the dismemberment of Germany—was told in a gracious personal letter that with Russian troops at Corfu and English soldiers at Malta the two crowns of France and Italy could not be kept apart, except